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PENCE INTRODUCES RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT ISRAEL SECURITY FENCE

Congressman Speaks from Firsthand Knowledge After Trip to Israel, Meeting with Israeli Prime Minister

Washington, Feb 25, 2004 - Washington, D.C.- With Israel's security fence being placed on trial before the Hague this week, Congressman Mike Pence introduced a resolution today to express congressional support for the Israel security fence. The resolution, which has a growing number of bipartisan cosponsors, also condemns the United Nations General Assembly for requesting the International Court of Justice to render an opinion on the legal consequences of the fence.

In remarks on the House floor, Pence stated:

"Today I will introduce bipartisan legislation that expresses congressional support for Israel to construct a security fence to reduce terrorist attacks and will condemn the United Nations General Assembly for requesting the International Court of Justice to render a legal opinion on the fence.

"After traveling to Israel last month and getting a firsthand look at the terror threat Israeli citizens face everyday, I realized in my heart that America must stand by Israel and her efforts to protect her people by constructing a security fence. Support for our staunchest ally in the Middle East could not be more important than right now.

"The construction of the security fence in Israel is an essential part of Israel's self-defense, has reduced terrorist attacks on innocent Israeli civilians, and deserves the unambiguous support of this Congress."

Background

The resolution has a growing number of cosponsors and states that the security fence is a necessary and proportional response to a campaign of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes by Palestinians. It also condemns the decision by the U.N. General Assembly because the World Court is politicized and hostile toward Israel.

The World Court includes two biased judges. The Egyptian judge, Nabil Elaraby, has called for Arab states to sue Israel for genocide, and the Jordanian judge was a special rapporteur for the U.N. Human Rights Commission who concluded that the settlements are illegal.

Pence noted that the fence is permitted under the Oslo Accords because under that agreement, Israel retained its right to provide for security, including security of settlers. At the same time, the request for World Court Opinion violates the agreement in the Accords to settle all disputes between the parties by direct negotiations or by agreed-upon methods.

Pence emphasized that the fence does not constitute annexation of disputed territory because the fence is a temporary measure and does not extend Israeli sovereignty.

Since September of 2000, 934 people of all nationalities have been killed by Palestinian violence and terrorism. Since 1993, 52 American citizens have been killed and 83 American citizens have been injured by Palestinian violence.

Pence is a member of the Middle East and Central Asia Subcommittee and the International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights Subcommittee.

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